An election 175*
was held in Siaton after the provincial government of Negros Oriental was created. Santiago Tayko was re-elected capitan. In this election eight municipal councilors were selected, one being Gadiane. The municipal council met twice a month to discuss the problems of Siaton. Felipe Tayko was the justice of the peace.[164]

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In 1903 the population of Siaton municipality was more than 10,000 yet less than 300 persons voted. Under such circumstances of political indifference and illiteracy, the control of the municipality's politics by a small, well-organized group was made relatively easy. In the 1951 national and municipal election, 2,414 Siaton residents voted. This increase indicates the growing interest in politics and decrease of illiteracy in Siaton municipality.

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In 1905 Felipe Tayko was elected capitan and Gadiane became the justice of peace. Gadiane writes that he was appointed by General Smith, then the head of the American forces in Negros. In 1907 Capitan Felipe Tayko ran for re-election and Gadiane opposed him. The office of capitan was now called presidente. Tayko received 194

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[164] Beginning with this period Gadiane's history and autobiography largely are accounts of his political struggles with the Taykos; a great deal of the information concerns individuals still living in Siaton. In many cases it was impossible to discuss various political events with those individuals involved to get their side of the dispute. Therefore, this sort of information has not been included; however, incidents are reported that seem to illustrate the type of political relationships that existed in Siaton during this period and that were checked with other informants.

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In 1927 Nacionalista Gadiane ran against the brother of Fidel Tayko, a member of the Liberal party. Gadiane gives a brief description of some aspects of his campaign.

> I ordered from Silliman University 4000 pieces of propaganda [printed pamphlets]. I sent to my leaders (in the barrios) 2000 pamphlets. I gave some of the people in the marketplace and at the komberas [feasts] and kaliwasans [funeral memorial services] I attended. We also distributed our propaganda in front of the church after mass.

The election was dishonest. When they arrived at the polls many voters were told that the election was over. So they went home without voting. The ballot boxes were also said to be stuffed. The Nacionalista group sent a telegram to the Governor-General in Manila and an American colonel soon appeared in Siaton to investigate the election irregularities.

On the advice of the colonel the election complaint was carried to Dumaguete. Similar complaints had been lodged with the provincial government by Nacionalista groups in Bais, Bacong, and Siquijor. The Nacionalista party spent ₱3,000 for the fees of their lawyers and Gadiane spent ₱800 personally. The Liberal party was said to have spent even more money to win the case. As a result several of the poll inspectors in Siaton were found guilty and imprisoned.

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In 1928 Bautista Tayko was elected presidente and four years later his brother, Fidel, was re-elected to the same office. It was during Fidel's office that semi-permanent school buildings were constructed at Barrios Inalad, Bonbonon, Giliga-on and Bonawon.

Inalad, Bonbonon, Giliga-on and Bonawon. A new concrete bridge was built over the Canaway River; this improved the transportation facilities during the rainy season. 175* 653 494

In 1935 the Philippine Commonwealth was established. No elections were held this year for municipal officers; their terms were merely extended for an additional two years.[165] During this period the water system of Siaton was installed. The national, provincial, and municipal governments each contributed $5,000 for the construction of the new water system. A concrete reservoir was built at Sitio Talio, west of Naga, and the water brought to the poblacion by gravity. The water was piped only to the residences of the more prominent people of the poblacion. Public faucets were also installed at the plaza and a few other places. The system is inadequate for during the dry season the pressure becomes so low that the water runs only for short periods during the day. 175* 653 365 565

In October 1937 clouds of locusts came to Siaton. The insects covered the plaza and climbed into the church, houses, and stores. Nearly all of the unharvested rice was destroyed. In the same year Fidel Tayko was re-elected as Siaton's mayor, the new name substituted for presidente. His defeated opponent protested the election as fraudulent and won his case in Dumaguete. The victor became mayor 175* 731 175* 666

165"The first elections under the Commonwealth were held December, 14, 1938, for local offices." Tolentino and Zaide, op. cit., p. 151.

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until 1940 when he was defeated for re-election by Telesforo Tayko, the brother of Fidel and Bautista and the great grandson of the first Telesforo Tayko. Bautista was elected mayor in 1951. In the 1953 presidential election there were 3,604 registered voters in Siaton municipality.

The Rivera-McMillan report states that 57 per cent of the population twenty-one years old and over in the thirteen barrios surveyed voted in the 1951 general election.[166] The presidential election of 1953 was more controversial and attracted a larger number of voters. Yet only 20 per cent of the people of Siaton registered and probably fewer voted in 1953. The people of Siaton are not as politically active as the barriofolk of the communities surveyed by Rivera and McMillan. One major factor for this condition is inadequate transportation and communication facilities. All voting booths, for example, are located in barrios along the National Road which makes it difficult for people to vote who live in the more isolated settlements of Siaton municipality.

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For the period 1879-1952, nearly three-fourths of a century, the capitans, presidentes, and mayors of Siaton municipality for fifty years of this period were members of the Tayko family. From 1897 to 1952 a Tayko was the top municipal official for forty-two of the fifty-five years. The dominance of the highest political

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[166] Rivera and McMillan, The Rural Philippines, p. 44.

51:Hart E-3 (1950-1952)1954 OA1 Philippines
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527 and going, the athletic games and contests are resumed. The older folks may take a siesta, visit or gossip with friends and relatives, or play mah-jong. If the *poblacion* is near a large river there may be aquatic sports. The gambling never stops, but continues night and day. Cockfights are held.

796 Between five and six, the religious procession occurs. The figure of the patron saint is carried outside the *poblacion* church, after a brief service, and slowly taken on a platform around the *poblacion*, under the four arches when they exit. In one *poblacion* the writer remarked about the absence of the arches and was informed this was *not* a *barrio* fiesta. The patron saint is followed by the priests who are visiting the local priest, and by the people, mostly women and children who often hold lighted candles and sing hymns. The procession returns to the church where another short service is held before the people disperse. Another fireworks display may be held at the end of the procession.

527 535 The Coronation Ball begins around seven or eight p.m. in the auditorium (the school building) or the outdoor dance hall (usually the *poblacion* plaza). The admission prizes varies from ₱2.00 to ₱3.00. Ladies are admitted free as is the custom. However, if a man brings more than two ladies, he is charged for his additional female companions.

At the Coronation Ball the "Queen" and her "Princesses" are installed. The new Queen may be crowned by the Queen of the previous year and some *poblacions* have torch parades to escort the Queen from her residence [537] to the dance. There is an introductory speech by a local official of the *poblacion* to introduce the guest speaker. The Coronation Ball speaker is quite frequently the congressmen of the district in which the *poblacion* is located, the governor, or a choice from other top provincial officials. Normally the congressman of Negros Oriental province speak at these fiestas in their own districts, although this is not always the case. After the crowning of the Queen of the fiesta, there may be a "Parade of the Royal Family," and the prizes and trophies are awarded to the winners. Contests are held for the best tango, mambo or waltz couple, and vocal solos or orations are given. When the program is over, the dance continues into the early hours of the following morning. The Coronation Ball is usually the fiesta climax for the young people who dance gracefully and tirelessly almost until dawn.

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527 666 The fiestas have a political function, particularly those held in the cities, *poblacions* or larger *barrios* located along the National Road. The small *barrio* fiesta, such as that at Caticugan, rarely has such a func-

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tion, for their poverty, political insignificance, and isolation make it difficult to attract congressmen or even provincial officials as guests or speakers. The political function of the fiesta increases when they are held during an election year. It is common knowledge in the Philippines that many national government officials use invitations to crown the Queen of the fiesta or give the Coronation Ball oration to build personal and party "political fences" in the area. During the last presidential election, a Manila newspaper noted that a wife of a prominent Representative, up for re-election, was accepting invitations "to even barrio fiestas." The comment was made that perhaps the wife was worried her husband would not be re-elected and was campaigning for him among the barrio folk. This use of the fiesta by some politicians is often felt to be undesirable by many Filipinos, although there is no reason why it should be. Campaigning is a legitimate activity of any elective public official. This relatively common attitude in regard to the political functions of many fiestas may reflect the better-educated Filipino's concern over the growing secularism of a supposedly religious event.

The printed fiesta programs, for example, often contain congratulatory messages from various officials, including the President of the Philippines. A study of the nature of these fiesta messages show they may be merely excessive flattery of the local inhabitants for their "progressiveness," "initiative," "industry," "hospitality," etc. For example:

> The people of ... (wrote one congressman) are industrious, loyal and energetic citizens of the country . . . . On the occasion of your town fiesta, I am sending my most cordial greetings to the noble and brave sons and daughters of this great town.

Some messages stress the importance of the fiesta, a distinctive Philippine custom. Former President Quirino wrote in one fiesta program:

> The celebration of the town (*poblacion*) fiesta is a unique Philippine custom. It affords the people a better opportunity to come together, work together, and enjoy together—thus fostering closer community spirit among themselves. This is precisely what the country needs today; oneness of purpose among our people as we tackle the great task of nation-building.

Some messages printed in the fiesta programs may urge the people to be more socially conscious. For example, the citizens of one district were praised by the mayor of Dumaguete City because they

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> ...do not neglect their duty in sending their children to school because they believe that in a democracy what is paramount is education, which is necessary for good citizenship.[10]

The messages may praise the *principalia* of the *poblacion*. One fiesta program states:

> Such great and prominent men as the late Governor Demetrio Larena, the late Senator Hermenegildo Villanueva, the late Representative Enrique C. Villanueva, the late Governor Guillermo Z. Villanueva, and the late Governor Praxedes Villanueva; all these dead national figures hailed and were reared in . . . (name of *poblacion*).

Such a sentence underlines the personalism typical of most Philippine politics.

Many of the messages, however, have a definite political slant, usually praising the national, provincial, or municipal politicians. In the printed fiesta program of one small *población*, the then Speaker of the House of Representatives wrote:

> You are indeed fortunate in having Congressman... (of the same party as the Speaker) as your representative in Congress. I am happy to tell you that Congressman ... is truly a representative of the people.... He is one of the most able members of the House .... With him, the fortune and future of your town is in safe hands. I urge you, therefore, to extend to him your unqualified support and cooperation.

(This fiesta occurred just before the election in which the congressman was running for a provincial office.)

Below are a few samples of the political aspects of many of the messages printed in the fiesta programs.

Important strides have been made towards the beautification

[177]
[876]

[10] This statement is an illustration of how effectively the American Administration (1898-1946) in the Philippines transferred *the American attitude that* education is a panacea for all economic and social problems. As for the *actual influence* of American educational theories and practices in rural Philippines, one noted Filipino educator has written about the "little dent the much-vaunted American-sponsored educational system has made in Philippine rural life." Laya, J.C. *Little Democracies* (Revised edition; Manila: Inang Wika Publishing Co., 1951, p. 6

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666 of the 'poblacion', thanks to the deep and abiding interest of congressman.. in the welfare and well-being of the community.

A top government official of Negros Oriental province stated in his message printed in one fiesta program that he would be unable to attend the event because:

> I am leaving for Manila soon in the interest and welfare of our province.

The congressman of one of the districts of Negros Oriental praised a local official in his fiesta message, stating he

> (official's name) .., is the guiding star that points to me the things needed by this town and hence I can say safely that the improvements and beautification of (the town)... is due mostly to the endeavor and sacrifices of our beloved.... (official's name).

The former Vice-President of the Philippines in his message printed on one fiesta program urged that the people work together because:

> Communal solidarity is necessary for the success of this affair just as national unity is essential for the growth of a nation.... To promote this unity, it is imperative for us to cultivate a community spirit against the factors that cause dissension and disorder among the people—corrupt practices of officials and individuals alike, such as abuse of authority and profiteering practiced by opportunists on the helpless masses. These corruptions can be remedied by the combined efforts on the part of the government authorities and the people.

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554 The fiestas stimulate local commercial activities. All who can afford it, and many who cannot, buy a new dress or a pair of trousers, clothing for the children, get a permanent wave, or purchase large supplies of food for their expected guests. Some Filipinos will borrow money or mortgage their land in order to have the means to entertain properly their visitors during the annual fiesta. So much personal and family prestige is involved that few measures are too drastic for some to maintain the expected level of hospitality: this is particularly true in the *poblacions.* Frugalities of the year, the penny-pinching to make ends meet, the saving for the unknown exigencies of the future, are discarded by many Filipinos for several days of "fun and frolic," of living fully.

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443 To the *poblacions* and *barrios,* even such as Caticugan but less so, come many itinerant vendors selling a variety of wares, normally unavails-

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Tenth, in the larger barrio

527 and *poblacion* the fiesta has a definite political function, especially in furnishing politicians with opportunities for making speeches, mending political "fences," and encouraging the officialdom of the local and provincial governments. *Eleventh*, the fiesta is one means of introducing into small *barrios* some of the techniques of democracy, of working together with one's neighbors in committees, and making a profit which is used to improve social or cultural conditions in the community. The printed fiesta programs have an educational function with their short, if not too critical, histories of the local region, listing all the provincial and municipal officials etc.

527 525 After *kahalogan* there may be a few dances, a "Barn Dance," a "Fashion Show," but the fiesta spirit is gone. The gambling activities may continue for several days after the end of the fiesta, but with less fervor. In the *barrios*, for the most part, the normal routine takes over after *kahalogan*. Lechon pits are filled. The bamboo arches slowly succumb to the elements or to fence-building scavengers. The professional gamblers depart with their tables and games for another fiesta. The gay window curtains, doilies, and tablecloths are packed away in the family trunk until next year. The *barrio* chapel decorations wilt and gather dust. For a while the barriofolk speak of *liwas piyesta* ("after the fiesta") in dating events in time. Soon the fiesta becomes only a pleasant memory. Before this memory has faded completely, preparations are afoot for the next fiesta. [178] Nearly every *barrio* and *poblacion* has an innate consistent "strain" toward making the next fiesta "more modern," or "progressive." This may mean a better orchestra, maybe electric lights for the first time, a bigger beauty contest, a more important speaker, a printed instead of typed fiesta program, or a larger statue of their patron saint.

Few Americans who have attended a Philippine fiesta forget the gay event or the warm friendship and spontaneous hospitality of their hosts. It is the writer's hope that this tentative sketching of the rural Philippine fiesta complex may interest Filipinos in making a more detailed study of one of the unique aspects of their culture.[11]

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[11] The author would be most grateful for any critical comments on this article from Filipino readers of the *Silliman Journal*. All letters received will be carefully read and promptly answered.